هل الانسان مسير أم مخير؟
لشيخ محمد بن صالح العثيمين

ARE WE FORCED OR DO WE HAVE FREE WILL?

This booklet is part of the Arabic book, 'Sharh Hadeeth Jibra'eel'
by Shaikh Muhammad ibn Saleh al-Uthaimeen (rahimahullah)

Translated by Shawana A. Aziz



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لشيخ محمد بن صالح العثيمين

الكتاب يبين فيه الشيخ معاني مهمة تتعلق بالايمان بالقدر مثل تقدير الله للمعاصي والاحتجاج على المعاصي بالقدر وهل يجب الرضى بالقدر والمقدور

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FOREWORD

Shaikh Saleh al-Fawzan writes in Mujmal Aqeedah as-Salaf,

> "Many groups have been misled in their understanding of Qadar (Predestination/Divine Decree). From them are the Jahmiyah and the Jabriyah who claim that the slave is forced in his actions and he has no control, ability or will. He is like a feather or a leaf which is blown by the wind.
>
> Another group went to the other extreme and declared that every man creates his own actions. Allah has no will or control in the slave's action. The slave performs his actions by his choice and power that is independent of the Will of Allah. Some of them exaggerated to the extent that they said that Allah does not know the thing before it occurs...
>
> The first group (Jabriyah) affirmed the Divine Decree and exaggerated (in their affirmation of Allah's Will) and thus robbed the slave from his will.

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The second group (Qadariyah) exaggerated in (their affirmation of) the slave's will until they denied the Will and Decree of Allah.

Both these groups are greatly mistaken and misguided.

The Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah is on the middle path – they affirm ability, choice and will for the slave but it is subservient to the Will and Power of Allah and the slave cannot do anything except by the Will of Allah."

[end quote]

This booklet gives the reader a thorough understanding of how the will, choice and ability of the slave are subservient to the Will and Power of Allah in the words of the noble Shaikh Muhammad ibn Saleh al-Uthaimeen (rahimahullah).

Apart from explaining what it means to believe in the Divine Decree, the Shaikh has expansively clarified important issues related to the subject, like Allah's Will for the occurrence of Kufr despite His Hatred for it.

Explanation of additional issues like - the sinner's justification by predestination. Is it obligatory upon us to be pleased with what has been decreed? - make the book more comprehensive and beneficial for the reader.

We ask Allah to forgive our mistakes and make us amongst those who are patient and pleased with the Decree of Allah. Ameen.

الإيمان بالقدر

FAITH IN THE DIVINE DECREE

Eeman (faith) in the Divine Decree/Predestination is to believe that Allah has decreed everything due to His (Absolute) Knowledge.

The scholars therefore, say that Eeman in the Divine Decree has four stages:

The Knowledge
The Writing
The Will
The Creation

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المرتبة الأولى: العلم

LEVEL 1 KNOWLEDGE

Allah is the Knower of everything - in general and in detail.

Allah knows everything concerning His Own Actions like creation, giving life, causing death, sending down rain, etc.

Allah knows everything concerning the actions of His creatures like the sayings and deeds of man. Even actions of the animals are known to Allah.

Everything is known to Allah before it occurs.

The proofs of Allah's Knowledge are numerous, amongst them are; "Allah is Ever All-Aware of everything." [Soorah al-Ahzab (33): 40] "It is Allah, Who has created the seven heavens and the earth the like thereof. His Command descends between them that you may know that Allah has power over all things and that Allah comprehends all things in (His) Knowledge." [Soorah at-Talaaq (65): 12]

“With Him are the keys of the Ghayb (unseen), none knows them but He. He knows whatever there is in (or on) the earth and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but he knows it. There is not a grain in the darknesses of the earth or anything fresh or dry, but is written in a clear record." [Soorah al-An'am (6): 59]

Let us discuss (Allah's Knowledge mentioned in) the above verse,

“He knows whatever there is in the earth and the sea."

The word, 'whatever' is general. So, Allah knows everything on the earth and in the seas.

"not a leaf falls but he knows it."

Any leaf in any tree in any place - at the top of a mountain or in the depth of a valley or in a meadow located in any part of the world. All trees shed leaves but Allah knows the leaf (that falls at the given time). (and Allah also knows) every leaf that shoots out - beforehand.

"There is not a grain in the darknesses of the earth."

Allah Knows every grain small or big in the darknesses of the earth.

The word, 'darknesses' is plural which indicates that the earth has darknesses; darkness of the night, darkness of the sea, darkness of the sand, darkness of the clouds, darkness of the rain and darkness of the dust. These are six darknesses and there may be more which we are unaware of. However, these darknesses do not change anything between Allah and the grain. Allah knows the grain and sees it.

“nor anything fresh or dry"

Allah knows everything that is fresh or dry.

“but is written in a Clear Record."

Clear Record means al-Lawh al-Mahfoodh (the Preserved Tablet). Al-Lawh al-Mahfoodh is due to the Knowledge of Allah.

The Knowledge of Allah concerning the actions of man is inscribed in the Book of Allah (i.e., al-Lawh al-Mahfoodh), “Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private counsel? (Yes We do) and Our Messengers (i.e., angels in charge of recording man's deeds) are by them to record.” [Soorah az-Zukhruf (43): 80]

> Allah knows the secret and the private counsel.
> Secret is that which one conceals in his heart and talks about it to himself.
> Private counsel is one's confidential talk with a friend.
> Both are known to Allah.

This Knowledge of Allah was never preceded by ignorance and is not affected by forgetfulness. Therefore when Fir'awn asked Moosa, “What about the generations of old?" (Moosa) said, "The knowledge thereof is with my Lord, in a Record. My Lord is neither unaware nor He forgets.” [Soorah Ta-Ha (20): 51-52]

“unaware” means ignorance “nor He forgets” means He knows.

Knowledge of man, on the other hand, is surrounded by both - prior ignorance and subsequent forgetfulness, “Allah has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you know nothing.” [Soorah an-Nahl (16): 78]

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المرتبة الثانية: الكتابة

LEVEL 2
THE WRITING

Allah recorded the destiny of everything fifty thousand years before creating the heavens and the earth. He recorded everything that will exist or not exist until the establishment of the Hour.

> When Allah created the pen, He said to it, "Write."
>
> The pen asked, "O Lord, what shall I write?"
>
> Allah replied, "Write the decree of what is to happen."

So everything that is to happen until the Day of Judgment was written. Thus whatever occurs to man could not have missed him and whatever misses him could not have occurred to him.

The proof (that everything was previously recorded) is the Saying of Allah, "Know you not that Allah knows all that is in the heaven and on earth? Verily, it is (all) in the Book (Al-Lawh Al-Mahfoodh). Verily! That is easy for Allah." [Soorah al-Hajj (22): 70]

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"No calamity befalls the earth or yourselves but is inscribed in the Book of Decrees (Al-Lawh Al-Mahfoodh) before We bring it into existence. Verily, that is easy for Allah." [Soorah al-Hadid (57): 22]

The people of knowledge said that the Writing is of many kinds:

(i) The General Writing which is in al-Lawh al-Mahfoodh (the Preserved Tablet).

(ii) The Writing about the Life of man.

The Writing about the life of man is recorded while one is in the womb of his mother. Ibn Mas'ood narrated, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told us, 'Every one of you is collected in the womb of his mother for the first forty days then he becomes a clot for another forty days then a piece of flesh for another forty days. Allah then sends an angel to breathe a soul into him. The angel is commanded to write down four decrees - his provision, life-span, deeds and whether he will be doomed or blessed (in the Hereafter).

By the One besides whom there is no god, one of you may do the deeds of the people of Paradise until there is no more than a cubit between him and it - then the decree overtakes him and he does the actions of the people of Hell and thus enters it.

One of you may do the deeds of the people of Hell until there is no more than a cubit between him and it. The decree then overtakes him and he does the actions of the people of Paradise and thus enters it.'' [Saheeh al-Bukharee]

Such is because the first writing (in al-Lawh al-Mahfoodh) is dominant.

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While reading the above Hadeeth, we should not forget the other Ahadeeth that give glad tidings to man. It is true that this Hadeeth causes one to be terrified and one might ask, 'How can one man perform the deeds of the people of Paradise until there is no more than a cubit between him and it and then - we seek refuge from Allah - he commits an act of the people of Hell?

Reply: There are – al-Hamdulillah – other texts which relieve the believer from his anguish (concerning this Hadeeth);

> Allah's Messenger said, “There is no one amongst you but Allah has already decreed his place in Paradise or in Hell."
>
> They asked, "O Messenger of Allah, should we not rely on the Book and leave striving?"
>
> The Prophet said, "Strive, for each one will be facilitated to do that for which he is created. Those who are blessed will perform the acts of those who are blessed and those who are the doomed will perform the acts of those who are doomed." Then he recited the verse, "As for him who gives (in charity) and keeps his duty to Allah and fears Him and believes in al-Husna. We will make smooth for him the path of ease (goodness). But he who is a greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient...We will make smooth for him the path for evil.” [Soorah al-Layl (92): 5-10]

This is a glad tiding from the Prophet - if one performs the acts of the blessed people then this is a proof that he is written amongst the blessed people. So let him be pleased.

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Imam Bukharee narrated in his Saheeh that the Prophet was in a battle and there was a brave and courageous man concerning whom the Prophet said, "Verily, he is from the people of Hell." - despite his bravery and courage.

This was hard on the Sahabah and so one of them said, "By Allah, I will follow him." and so he did.

An arrow of the enemy wounded the brave man and so he was angered. He placed his sword on his chest and leaned on it until the sword emerged from his back. The man thus committed suicide.

The Companion returned to the Prophet and said, "I bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allah!"

The Prophet asked, "What is the matter?"

The Companion replied, "The man concerning whom you informed us that he was from the people of the Fire, did such and such."

Then the Prophet said, "Verily, a man may perform actions of the people of Paradise as it seems to the people while he is from the people of the Fire." [See, Saheeh al-Bukharee]

I ask Allah to purify my intentions and your intentions because intentions play a major role in one's orientation. The heart is the chief and it controls man. We must therefore consider the heart, examine it and purify it - perhaps, it contains impurities. Man might pretend to perform good deeds through the limbs but there might be in his heart this corrupt impurity that leads one to the fire in the end.

Some of the Salaf said,
"My soul has not striven for anything
- its striving is (only) for Ikhlas (sincerity)."

That which many of us consider insignificant requires immense striving. If there is any bit of Riya (show-off) in a person, he is not a mukhlis (one who possesses Ikhlas - sincerity). Perhaps, Riya might be in his heart and it becomes a cause of his destruction at the last moment.

Ibn Qayyim (rahimahullah) mentioned (a story with regards to) the effects of sins and its consequences. A man indulged in Riba (interest - forbidden business) was prompted to recite the Shahadah by his family members at the verge of death. But he would only say 'ten eleven' because his heart only contained those prohibited issues that prevailed and overwhelmed it at the last moment. We seek Allah's Refuge.

> When Imam Ahmad (rahimahullah) was at the verge of death – and his knowledge, worship and piety are well-known – whenever he lost consciousness, he would say, "not yet, not yet.'
>
> So he was asked upon regaining his consciousness, "O Abu Abdullah, what was your saying, 'not yet, not yet?' ”
>
> He replied, "I saw Shaytan biting on his fingers and saying, 'You have passed me. O Ahmad.' I told him, 'Not yet, not yet.' meaning I have not passed you as long as the soul in the body.

Man is thus in danger and as the Prophet said, "...until there is no more than a cubit between him and it (Paradise) then the decree overtakes him and he does the actions of the people of Hell and thus he enters it (Hell)."

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(iii) The Annual Writing which is recorded annually during Laylatul-Qadr (The Night of Qadr). (This Writing is) concerning what will happen during the (coming) year.

"We sent it (this Qur'an) down on a blessed night in the month of Ramadan. Verily, We are ever warning. Therein (that night) is decreed every matter of ordainments." [Soorah ad-Dukhan (44): 3-4]

'decreed' means every issue is clarified and specified in detail.

Allah also says, "Verily! We have sent it (this Qur'an) down in the night of al-Qadr." [Soorah al-Qadr (97): 1]

(iv) The Continuous Daily Writing is the writing of the actions because indeed man does not act except that it is recorded – whether the act was in his favor or against him as Allah says, "Nay! But you deny the recompense. But verily, over you (are appointed angels in charge of mankind) to watch you, Kiraman (honorable) Katibeen writing down (your deeds). They know all that you do." [Soorah al-Infitaar (82): 9-10]

"Indeed We have created man, and We know what his own self whispers to him. We are nearer to him than his jugular vein (by Our Knowledge). (Remember!) that the two receivers (recording angels) receive, one sitting on the right and the other on the left. Not a word does he (or she) utter, but there is a watcher by him ready (to record it)." [Soorah al-Qaf (50): 16-18]

This Continuous Daily Writing is different from the previous writings. The previous writings are concerning what man will do whereas this writing is concerning actions which he has performed and thus he will be recompensed (accounted) for them.

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(v) The Writing of the Angels that are present at the doors of the mosques on Friday. They write down (the names of) those who reach the mosque first.

Whoever reaches at the first hour, it is as if he has sacrificed a camel (in Allah's cause).

Whoever goes in the second hour it is as if he has sacrificed a cow.

Whoever goes in the third hour, it is as if he has sacrificed a horned ram.

Whoever goes in the fourth hour, it is as if he has sacrificed a hen.

Whoever goes in the fifth hour, it is as if he has offered an egg.

When the Imam comes out (i.e. starts delivering the sermon), the angels present themselves to listen to the sermon." [Saheeh al-Bukharee]

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المرتبة الثالثة: المشيئة

LEVEL 3

THE WILL

Everything exists or does not exist by the Will of Allah. The Muslims are largely unanimous on this issue and all of them agree, "Whatsoever Allah Wills happens and what He does not Will does not occur."

Everything occurs by the Will of Allah.

The Actions of Allah are without doubt by the Mashee'ah (Will) of Allah like creation, provision, life and death. Similarly actions of the creation are also by the Mashee'ah (Will) of Allah.

The proof from the Quran is the Saying of Allah, "If Allah had willed, succeeding generations would not have fought against each other after clear Verses of Allah had come to them but they differed - some of them believed and others disbelieved. If Allah had willed, they would not have fought against one another but Allah does what He likes." [Soorah al-Baqarah (2): 253]

Fighting is the action of the creation which Allah caused (to occur) by His Mashee'ah (Will).

Allah says,
"We have appointed enemies for every Prophet
Shayateen among mankind and jinn,
inspiring one another with adorned speech as a delusion.
If your Lord had so willed, they would not have done it,"
[Soorah al-An'aam (6): 112]

"If Allah had willed they would not have done so."
[Soorah al-An'aam (6): 112]

"To whomsoever among you who wills to walk straight -
and you will not unless (it be) that Allah wills,
the Lord of the Alameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists)."
[Soorah at-Takwir (81): 29]

Our actions thus occur by the Will of Allah

Rational proof

(that everything – the good and evil - exists by the Will of Allah)

Question: Is the creation the dominion of Allah?

Reply: Yes.

Question: Can there be anything in the dominion of Allah which Allah does not want?

Reply: No. As long as the thing belongs to Allah, there cannot be anything in His Dominion that Allah does not want.

Thus, everything that is in Allah's Dominion is by His Will and Decision. There can never be anything in His Dominion that which He does not want.

If there were in His Dominion that which He does not will then His Dominion would be deficient, (because) there would be in His dominion that which would occur without His Knowledge and be beyond His Control.

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المرتبة الرابعة: الخلق

LEVEL 4
THE CREATION

Faith in the Creation means believing that Allah created everything. The proof is the Saying of Allah,

"He (Allah) has created everything
and has measured it exactly according to its due measurements."
[Soorah al-Furqan (25): 1-2]

"Allah is the Creator of all things
and He is the Wakeel (Trustee, Disposer of affairs, Guardian, etc.)
over all things." [Soorah az-Zumar (39): 62]

"He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth.
How can He have children when He has no wife?
He created all things and He is the All-Knower of everything."
[Soorah al-An'am (6): 102]

"Verily, We have created all things with Qadar."
[Soorah al-Qamar (54): 49]

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There are numerous verses which clearly mention that everything is a creation of Allah - even actions of mankind are a creation of Allah although they are by the choice and will of man because the actions of man are an outcome of two things:

a) Strong will
b) Complete strength

For example, if I were to ask you to lift a rock weighing 10 kg and you refuse saying, "I don't want to lift it."

In this case, you decide to refuse to lift the rock.

I again ask you to lift the rock and you say, "Yes." So, you try to lift the rock but you are unable to do so.

In this case, you are unable to lift the rock due to lack of strength.

For the third time I ask you to lift and you say, "Yes." This time you lift it over your head.

In this case, you lifted the rock by your strength and decision.

All our actions are thus an outcome of strong will and complete strength, and the One Who created this will and strength is Allah.

If Allah had caused you to be paralyzed, then you would be incapable.

If Allah had changed your intention of doing that act, then (too) you would not have done it.

A Bedouin was asked, "By what do you know your Lord?"

He replied, "Through revoking of one's intentions and changing of one's interest."

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Man sometimes firmly resolves to do something then he changes his mind without any cause. Sometimes one goes out intending to meet a friend but he changes his mind and does not go without a reason. It is Allah, Who caused his heart to change his intention and so he returns.

Therefore, we say, "The actions of man are a creation of Allah because they are an outcome of strong will and complete strength and the Creator of this will and strength is Allah."

Allah is the Creator of will and strength (of man) because these are the characteristics of the slave and the All-Powerful Who created the slave is Allah. The Creator of the one who possesses the characteristic (i.e., the slave) is (also) the Creator of the creature's (slave's) characteristics. It is thus clarified that the actions of man are a creation of Allah.

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المبحث الأول: لله مشيئة، وله إرادة ومحبة

Hereunder are discussions concerning the issue of al-Qadar because this subject - as we have mentioned at the beginning of our discussion - is critical, and includes numerous issues.

DISCUSSION 1

ALLAH HAS MASHEE'AH IRADAH AND MAHABBAH

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Allah says in the Quran,
"Allah does what He Wills (al-Mashee'ah)."
[Soorah Ibraheem (14): 27]

"Allah does what He wants (al-Iradah)."
[Soorah al-Baqarah (2): 253]

Question: Are al-Mashee'ah (Will) and al-Iradah (Want/Will) one and the same thing?

Reply: No, they are different.

Question: Are al-Iradah (Want/Will) and al-Mahabbah (Love) one and the same thing? i.e., if Allah Loves something (does it also mean that) He Wills it? and if Allah Wills something (does it also mean that) He loves it?

Reply: Al-Iradah and al-Mahabbah are not the same.

So there are three things –

(i) al-Mashee'ah
(ii) al-Iradah
(iii) al-Mahabbah

All three have different meanings.

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Al-Mashee'ah (Will) concerns issues of the universe regardless of whether it is loved by Allah or is detestable to Him. Allah might Will something although He does not love it and He might Will something that He Loves.

Evil is created by the Will of Allah although He does not love it.

Corruption in the earth exists by the Will of Allah although Allah does not love it.

Kufr exists by the Will of Allah although Allah does not love it.

So perhaps Allah might Will an issue concerning the universe that He does not love and He might Will an issue which He Loves.

Al-Mahabbah (Love) is related to issues of the Sharee'ah (religious legislations).

Al-Mahabbah includes only those things which Allah has made permissible.

Evil is not loved by Allah but He loves obedience regardless of whether it occurs or does not occur.

Al-Iradah has two aspects;

(a) an aspect which comprises of al-Mashee'ah
(b) an aspect which comprises of al-Mahabbah

The first aspect of al-Iradah which includes al-Mashee'ah is al-Iradah al-Kawniyah (the Universal Will)

> The Universal Will necessarily occurs. If Allah wants something to happen with regards to the universe then it occurs without fail regardless of whether Allah loves it or does not love it.

(al-Iradah al-Kawniyyah is mentioned in verses like)

"Allah does what He wants." [Soorah al-Baqarah (2): 253]

"If it is Allah's Will to keep you astray." [Soorah Hud (11): 34]

This verse means, "If Allah Wills to keep you astray" and it does not mean, 'Allah loves to keep you astray' because Allah does not love to misguide His slaves.

The second aspect of al-Iradah which includes Love is al-Iradah ash-Shar'iyyah (the Legislative Will).

> The Legislative Will may not necessarily occur like the Saying of Allah, "Allah wishes to accept your repentance." [Soorah an-Nisa (4): 27]

The Will mentioned in the verse is al-Iradah ash-Shar'iyyah because if it meant al-Mashee'ah (i.e., the universal Will which necessarily occurs) then repentance would have occurred with regard to all mankind but we see that there are people who repent and there are those who do not repent.

It is possible that both the Wills – al-Iradah al-Kawniyyah and al-Iradah ash-Shar'iyyah - agree with each other in one situation like for example, the Eeman of Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه. This is what Allah Willed legislatively and universally.

It is the Legislative Will of Allah because Allah loves it.

It is the Universal Will of Allah because it occurred.

An example of al-Iradah al-Kawniyyah (Universal Will) which is different from al-Iradah ash-Shar'iyyah (Legislative Will) is the Kufr (disbelief) of Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab. Their Kufr falls under al-Iradah al-Kawniyyah because Kufr is the opposite of Sharee'ah and Allah does not love the disbelievers.

An example of al-Iradah ash-Shar'iyyah (Legislative Will) which is different from al-Iradah al-Kawniyyah (Universal Will) is the Eeman of Fir'awn. It is the Shar'iyyah Will because Allah sent Moosa عليه السلام to him. Moosa عليه السلام called him (to faith) but Allah did not Will it to occur due to al-Iradah al-Kawniyyah and therefore, it did not occur and Fir'awn did not accept Eeman.

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المبحث الثاني:

كراهية الله سبحانه للكفر مع إرادته له

DISCUSSION 2

ALLAH'S WILL FOR THE OCCURRENCE OF KUFR DESPITE HIS HATRED FOR IT

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Question: If Allah hates Kufr (disbelief) then how is it that He Wills it to occur although no one can force Allah?

Reply: Murad (cause/motive) is of two kinds;

a) Murad (cause/motive) which is (loved) for oneself. The thing that is beloved is wanted for one's own self, like Eeman. So Eeman is the Murad of Allah universally and legislatively because it is intended for Himself.

b) Murad (cause/motive) for (the well-being of) someone else - meaning Allah Wills it to occur not because He loves it but when He arranges the well-being (of His creation, He Wills it to occur) for the benefit of others. This can also include those issues which are due to Wisdom and not due to being forced.

Example

Kufr is detestable to Allah but Allah Wills it to occur for His slaves because

If there was no Kufr, the believer would not have been distinguished from the disbeliever and he would not deserve praise since everybody would be a Mu'min (believer).

If there was no Kufr, there would have been no struggling. Who would fight the believers?

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If there was no Kufr, the Mu'min (believer) would not have valued the blessing of Islam.

If Kufr did not occur and all of mankind was Muslim then Islam would not have been a merit.

If Kufr did not occur, the creation of Hell-Fire would be futile whereas Allah has mentioned, "If your Lord had so willed, He could surely have made mankind one nation (all following the religion of Islam) but they will not cease to disagree - except him on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy and for that did He create them. The Word of your Lord has been fulfilled, "Surely, I shall fill Hell with jinn and men all together.'" [Soorah Hud (11): 118-119]

It is thus clear that the universal will – which might be detestable to Allah – could be intended for (the well-being of) others.

Example

A father immensely loves his son. If a spark of fire was to fall on the son, it would hurt the father's heart as though the spark fell on him due to his love for the son.

The son falls sick and is taken to the doctor, who prescribes that the son be treated with cauterization* (treatment by fire) in order to regain his health. The father agrees to the treatment.

This (decision of the father) is for the sake of the son and not for his ownself. It is for (the well-being of) someone other than himself.

* A medical term describing the burning of a part of body to remove or close off a part – in a process called Cautery which destroys some tissue in an attempt to mitigate damage, remove an undesired growth or minimize other potential medical harmful possibilities such as infections, when antibiotics are not available.

You thus find that the father, with full calmness, comfort and contentment decides that his son be cauterized with fire although if a spark of fire was to fall on his son, it was as if it fell on the father's heart.

It is thus known that something hateful can occur - not for one's ownself but for (the well-being of) someone else.

It is also known that something detestable might be done - not for one's own self but for the sake of someone else. Such is also the case of Kufr, sin and corruption. Allah Wills it when it assures well-being – thus Kufr is willed by Allah for the sake of others and not for His Own-Self.

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المبحث الثالث: قضاء الله والرضا به

DISCUSSION 3

ALLAH'S DECREE AND THE SLAVE'S PLEASURE WITH IT

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It is obligatory upon us to believe in the Decree of Allah whatever it might be and be pleased with it (i.e., the Decreeing of Allah) <u>but is it obligatory upon us to be pleased with what has been decreed?</u>

What has been decreed is of two types;

1. The Legislative Decree (or the religious decree)

2. The Universal Decree

It is obligatory upon us to be pleased with the legislative decree like:

Allah has prescribed the five daily prayers. We have to believe in its obligation and accept it.

Allah has decreed the prohibition of adultery. It is obligatory upon us to believe in its prohibition.

Allah has decreed the legitimacy of trade. It is obligatory upon us to believe that trade is halaal (permissible) and be pleased with it.

Allah has decreed the prohibition of Riba (usury). It is obligatory upon us to believe and accept its prohibition.

The bottom line of this issue is that it is obligatory to be pleased with the Shar'iyyah (Legislative) Decree and accept it because, "Whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the disbelievers." [Soorah al-Maidah (5): 44]

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The Universal Decree is that which Allah decrees concerning the universe. If this decree is loved by one and is in accordance with one's nature then pleasure with it is from the natural instinct of man.

For example,

- If Allah decrees for the slave to be knowledgeable then he is pleased with it.
- If Allah decrees for the slave to be wealthy then he is pleased with it.
- If Allah decrees that the slave has children then he will be pleased with the Decree of Allah.

If the decree is not favorable to man and does not agree with his nature like sickness, poverty, ignorance, loss of children, etc. then the scholars have disagreed concerning it. Some said that it is obligatory to be pleased with it while others said that it is Mustahabb (recommended) to be pleased with it. The correct opinion is that pleasure with the unfavorable universal decree of Allah is Mustahab (recommended).

Man can be in four conditions when the decree is unfavorable and does not agree with his nature,

a) Dissatisfaction
b) Patience
c) Pleasure
d) Thankfulness

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1) Dissatisfaction is prohibited.

> (for example) If one is afflicted with hardship concerning his wealth, then he is dissatisfied with the Decree and Will of Allah. He starts scratching his face and tearing his clothes. He finds in himself hatred for Allah's arrangement of affairs. This is prohibited and therefore Allah's Messenger cursed the one, who wails and the one who listens to it, "He is not from us, who slaps his cheeks, tears his clothes, and calls the call of ignorance."

<u>Does this prohibited action, which is a major sin, decrease the hardship of the calamity?</u>

No, never does it ever decrease the hardship of the calamity, rather it increases it. Man becomes dissatisfied and grief-stricken. He does not gain any benefit from it. The Decree of Allah will surely occur no matter what. You have no power over it - (it is not such that) if you had not done that then this would not have happened. This thinking is a delusion from Shaytan. The decree will surely take place therefore Allah's Messenger said, "Whatever occurred to you could not have missed you, and what missed you could not have occurred to you,"

Without doubt the decree has to occur as Allah Willed it, Allah's Messenger said, "...if anything (in the form of trouble) comes to you, don't say, "If I had not done that, it would not have happened such and such,' but say, Allah did what He had ordained and your 'if' opens the gate for Shaytan." [Saheeh Muslim (6441)]

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If one drives in a car and has an accident and so he pitifully says, "If I had not come out for this ride, then my car would not have been destroyed."

Will this benefit him? No. It will never benefit because this accident was decreed and the matter is carried out just as it is decreed no matter what.

2. Sabr (Patience)

Man suffers greatly from hardship and is saddened but he practices patience and does not utter with his tongue (anything that is displeasing to Allah), nor (does any act that is displeasing to Allah) through his limbs. He takes control of his heart and says,

اللهم أجرني في مصيبتي، واخلف لي خيراً منها
إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون

"O Allah, recompense me for my hardship and give me that which is better than it. Verily, we belong to Allah and to him we shall return." [See, Saheeh Muslim]

The ruling of patience here is that of obligation.

It is obligatory on man to be patient during hardship and not utter anything that is prohibited nor do anything that is prohibited.

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3. Ridaa (Pleasure)

Being pleased with the Decree of Allah despite being afflicted by a calamity

The difference between Sabr (patience) and Ridaa (pleasure) is that the heart of the Radi (one who is pleased) is never hurt, it goes along with the Decree.

Allah's Messenger said, "...If he (the believer) is granted ease of living, he is thankful and this is best for him. And if he is afflicted with a hardship, he perseveres and this is best for him." [Saheeh Muslim]

i.e., both the situations are the same for him as far as accepting the decree of Allah is concerned. He is pleased whether he is in difficulty or in ease.

Some of the scholars say that this (state of affair) is obligatory while the majority of the people of knowledge are of the opinion that it is not obligatory - rather it is Mustahab (recommended).

Ridaa (pleasure) is without doubt a more complete state than Sabr (patience) but as for making it obligatory upon the people and saying that it is obligatory upon you to be in the same state during calamity and in its absence is difficult and no one can handle it. Man can practice patience but he is incapable of being pleased at all times.

4. Shukr (Thankfulness)

> One might find this strange. How can one be afflicted with calamity and thank Allah? Isn't this contrary to the nature of man?

Man would be thankful to Allah if he were to know the rewards of a calamity that is endured with patience. Allah says, "Only those who are patient shall receive their rewards in full, without reckoning." [Soorah az-Zumar (39): 10] and He said, "give glad tidings to as-Sabireen (the patient ones, etc.) who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Truly! To Allah we belong and truly to Him we shall return. They are those on whom are the Salawaat (blessings) from their Lord and His Mercy..." [Soorah al-Baqarah (2): 155-157]

One says, "How trivial and worthless is this world in my eyes! If I were to gain from this calamity - which I bear with patience - such blessings, mercy of Allah and rewards without reckoning." - then one will thank Allah for this blessing.

He will then see that this is a blessing from Allah because the whole world is transient whereas the rewards, blessings and mercy are forever – so he thanks Allah for this calamity.

Thankfulness upon calamity is Mustahab (recommended) and not obligatory because it is of a higher level than pleasure – however, thankfulness upon blessings is obligatory.

So, these are the states of man with respect to what is decreed universally and that which are against nature and not favorable to him.

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Question: What do you say about being pleased with regards to what man does (against) the religious rulings like adultery and robbery. Are you pleased with his adultery and robbery?

Reply: There are two aspects to this:

First: Allah decreed it and originated it and therefore it is a universal decree. We have to be pleased with it in this regard and we do not say, 'Why Allah caused the adulterer to commit adultery? Or why He caused the robber to commit robbery?' We cannot raise objections.

Second: We are not pleased with the action of the slave. We establish the Hadd (punishment) on him, "The woman and the man guilty of illegal sexual intercourse, flog each of them with a hundred stripes. Let not pity withhold you in their case, in a punishment prescribed by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a party of the believers witness their punishment." [Soorah an-Nur (24): 2]

Concerning the robber, Allah said, "Cut off the hand of the thief, male or female, as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allah. And Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise." [Soorah al-Maidah (5): 38]

It is known that flogging and cutting of hand is displeasing. If one were to be pleased with them, then we would not have inflicted it as a punishment upon them.

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المبحث الرابع: احتجاج المذنبين بالقدر

DISCUSSION 4

THE SINNER'S JUSTIFICATION BY THE DIVINE DECREE

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We have mentioned that everything is recorded, everything occurs by the Will of Allah and everything is a creation of Allah.

So does this belief give the sinner an excuse for his sins?

If we were to catch a man disobeying Allah and ask him, "Why do you commit disobedience?"

He replies, "This is by the Will and Decree of Allah."

This statement is correct but if one uses this statement to justify his sins then this is what we say in reply,

"This is a false argument. There is no justification for your sin in predestination. The proof is the Saying of Allah, "Those who took partners with Allah will say, "If Allah had willed, we would not have taken partners with Him nor would our fathers...” Likewise, belied those who were before them till they tasted of Our Wrath." [Soorah al-An'am (6): 148]

So, Allah did not accept their excuse and the proof that He did not accept their argument are the words, 'till they tasted of Our Wrath.'

If they had an excuse in the Divine Decree then Allah would not have made them taste the Wrath.

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But those who are against what we have mentioned will come up with this argument,

> How do you assert that Allah falsified the argument of those who said, "If Allah had willed, we would not have taken partners with Him..." [Soorah al-An'am (6): 148] whereas Allah said to His Messenger, "Follow what has been inspired to you (O Muhammad) from your Lord, 'none has the right to be worshipped but He' and turn aside from those who associate partners with Allah. Had Allah willed, they would not have taken others besides Him in worship. We have not made you a watcher over them nor are you set over them to dispose of their affairs." [Soorah al-An'am (6): 106-107]

Reply: There is a difference between the meanings of the two verses;

"Follow what has been inspired to you (O Muhammad) from your Lord, None has the right to be worshiped but He and turn aside from those who associate partners with Allah." [Soorah al-An'aam (6): 106-107]

This is a consolation for the Messenger, Allah is explaining to him that their Shirk is occurring by the Will of Allah - in order to calm the Prophet down. Allah is teaching the Prophet that if it is the Will of Allah then it will surely occur and one should be pleased with it.

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As for the second verse, "If Allah had willed, we would not have taken partners (in worship) with Him..." [Soorah al-An'am (6): 148]

Verily, Allah falsified their argument because they wanted to justify their Shirk and sin by the Divine Decree. If they had presented the the Divine Decree in order to submit to the Decree along with rectification of the situation, then we would have accepted it from them, like if they had committed Shirk and then said, "this occurred by the Will of Allah, but we seek forgiveness and we repent from it.' Then we say, 'you are correct.' But if they say when we forbid them from Shirk, 'If Allah had willed, we would not have taken partners (in worship) with Him..." [Soorah al-An'am (6): 148] then this is not acceptable from them at all.

Secondly: The falsity of the argument of the sinner by predestination is also proven by the Saying of Allah, "Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against Allah after the Messengers." [Soorah an-Nisa (4): 165]

The proof in this verse is that if sending the Messenger cuts out all the excuses of the sinner then it means that the Decree was never an excuse for the sinner - because if Decree was an excuse for the sinner then it should have been cut off by the sending of the messengers but the Decree still stands.

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Thirdly: Another proof of the falsity of using the Divine Decree as an excuse is to say to those who use predestination as an excuse - before you are two ways - a good way and an evil way. Before entering the evil path, does he know that Allah has decreed for him to enter the path of evil?

Surely he does not know. If he does not know then why does he not expect that Allah has decreed for him the path of goodness?

Man does not know what Allah has decreed except after it occurs because the Will of Allah, as some scholars said, is a concealed secret. It is not known until after it occurs and we witness it.

So we say to the sinner, 'You preceded yourself to the evil while you were unaware that Allah had decreed it for you. So if you were unaware then why did you not expect that Allah had decreed for you the good and take the door to good?!'

Fourthly:

If the sinner (who seeks to use al-Qadar as an excuse) is asked, "What do you choose for your worldly affairs; good or evil?'

He will reply: the good.

We say: Then why do you not choose the good with regards to the affairs of the hereafter?

Similarly if we ask the sinner, "When you travel to a city and there are two ways; the left way is not flat, has a dead end and has great dangers while the right way is flat and safe. So through which path will you travel?"

He will surely reply, "From the right."

We say, "Why do you go to the right way which has good and success with regards to the issues of the world? Why do you not go to the left path in which there is a dead end and is not flat and then say, 'this is decreed for me?!"

He will reply, "I do not know the decree but I choose for myself the better option."

So we say, "Why do you not choose the best with regards to the Hereafter (too)?!"

Another example:

We catch any man and begin to violently beat him. Whenever he screams we tell him, 'This is the Decree of Allah.'

Will he accept this justification?

Surely he will not accept it whereas whenever he disobeys Allah, he says, 'this is the Decree of Allah' but if we disobey Allah concerning an issue that pertains to him, he will not accept when we tell him, 'this is the Decree of Allah' rather he will say, 'this is your action.'

Is this not a proof against him?

A thief was brought before Ameerul-Mumineen Umar Ibn Khattab who ordered that the thief's hands be cut because such is (prescribed in the Sharee'ah).

So the thief said, "Wait, O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, By Allah, I did not steal except by Allah's Will and Decree.

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The thief was truthful in his statement but before him was Umar ibn Khattab, who said, "We are not cutting your hands except with the Will and Decree of Allah." Then he ordered the cutting by the Decree of Allah. So Umar used the same argument against him which the thief used as a proof.

If someone argues that Allah's Messenger approved of using the Divine Decree as an excuse in the Hadeeth which mentions that Adam used the Divine Decree as an excuse. When Moosa said, "you are our father, you caused us and yourself to be expelled from Paradise." So, Adam said, "Do you blame me for that which Allah had written for me before He created me? So the Messenger said, 'So, Adam overpowered Moosa." [Saheeh al-Bukharee]

i.e., Adam won the argument, although Adam argued based upon the Will of Allah and his Decree.

Doesn't this Hadeeth approve using Divine Decree as an excuse?

Reply: This is not an excuse by the Will and Decree of Allah for the action of the slave or his sin. <u>It is an excuse by the Divine Decree for the calamity that resulted from the action.</u> It is an excuse by the Divine Decree for the affliction and not the sins, and therefore he said, 'you caused yourself and us to be expelled from Paradise.' And he did not say, 'you disobeyed your Lord and caused us to be expelled from Paradise.'

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So, Adam used the Divine Decree as an excuse for the expulsion from Paradise which is considered a calamity, and using the Divine Decree as an excuse for calamities is not prohibited.

If you were to travel and then meet with an accident, and someone said to you, 'Why did you travel? If you had stayed at home then this would not have happened to you?' How will you reply? You will reply saying, 'this is the Will of Allah and His Decree. I did not come out in order to run into an accident, rather I came out for good but I met with an accident.

Similarly, did Adam disobey Allah in order to be expelled from Paradise?

No. What happened to him was merely the Will and Decree of Allah.

Therefore, Adam's excuse by the Decree for the calamity that occurred is a sound argument and therefore Allah's Messenger said, "Adam over-powered Moosa."

Another example, what would you say concerning a man who committed sins, regretted and then repented for?

One of his brothers came to him and asked, 'How did this happen to you?'

He replies, 'This is the Will of Allah and His Decree.'

Is his excuse correct?

Yes, it is correct because he repented. He did not use the Divine Decree as an excuse to continue his sin rather he is regretful.

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An example of this is the following incident.

> Allah's Messenger entered upon Ali ibn Abee Talib and Fatima and found them sleeping, and it was as if the Messenger blamed them for not waking up (for prayers) So, Ali ibn Abi Talib said, "O Messenger of Allah, verily our souls are in the Hands of Allah. If He Wishes, He ceases them, and when he wishes He sends them. The Messenger of Allah left while saying, "But, man is ever more quarrelsome than anything." [Soorah al-Kahf (18): 54]

So, did the Prophet accept the excuse? No, rather the Prophet explained that this is arguing because the Prophet knows that the souls are in the Hands of Allah but man has to be determined and make sure that he wakes up for prayers.

In conclusion, it is clear to us that using the Divine Decree as an excuse for calamities is permissible. Similarly, using the Divine Decree as an excuse for sin after repentance is permissible. As for using the Divine Decree as an excuse for sinning in order to become guilt-free and persist in sin is not permissible.

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المبحث الخامس:
هل الانسان مسير أم مخير؟

DISCUSSION 4

DOES MAN HAVE FREEDOM OF CHOICE?

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The following statement has become widespread amongst people in today's times;

'Does man have freedom of choice or is he bound (by the Decree of Allah)?'

If the actions which man performs are those concerning which he has a choice then man has freedom of choice like his being able to eat and drink. Therefore, when the call to Fajr prayer is heard, some people proceed towards water. This is by their choice.

Similarly, when man feels sleepy he goes to bed by his choice.

When he hears the call for the Maghrib prayer he eats by his choice.

Similarly you will find that man has freedom of choice in all actions.

If it was not so then the punishment of the sinner would be injustice. How can man be punished for something over which he has no control?

If it was not so then how could man be rewarded for something over which he has no control? Are punishments and rewards futile?

So, man has choice but he does not perform any action except that it is Decreed by Allah because there is an authority over his authority, but Allah does not force man. Man has choice and and he acts by his choice.

Therefore, when an act occurs without the man's intention, then it is not attributed to him. Allah said about the people of the Kahf, “We

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turned them on their right and on their left sides." [Soorah al-Kahf (18): 18]

So the act of turning is attributed to Allah, because they were sleeping and they had no power over themselves, Allah's Messenger said, “He, who forgetfully eats or drinks in the state of fasting, then his fasting is complete because verily, Allah feeds him and ...”

So, the feeding and drinking is attributed to Allah because the man did not do it by choice. He did not choose to ruin his fast by eating and drinking.

Consequently, I have not seen this statement in books of the Sahabah or the Taba'een, and those who followed them, nor in the statements of the scholars, not even in the writings of Shaikhul-Islam ibn Taymiyah, Ibn Qayim or from the philosophers. Rather, this has come up in later times and people have started to think about it, “Is man in control or is he controlled?”

We know that we perform actions by our choice and decision. We do not feel that anybody is compelling us or forcing us to do it. Rather we are the ones who want to do something, then we do it and if we want to abandon it, we abandon it.

> But as we said earlier in the levels of the Divine Decree that our actions are a result of strong will and complete strength and these are two characteristics in ourselves, and we are a creation of Allah, and the creator of the bark is the creator of the branches also.

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فوائد الإيمان بالقضاء والقدر

BENEFITS OF FAITH IN THE DIVINE DECREE

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1. Completion of faith in Allah because Qadar is the Power of Allah, so Eeman in it is the completion of one's Faith in Allah.

2. Completion of the pillars of Eeman because Allah's Messenger mentioned it under Eeman in the Hadeeth of Jibra'eel

3. Man stays content because he knows that everything is from Allah, he is pleased with it and content. He knows that what has occurred to him could not have missed him and what missed him could not have occurred to him.

We have already mentioned that what has occurred can never be changed, so do not attempt, think or say 'If,' because that which has occurred cannot be changed or altered.

4. Completion of Faith in Allah's Lordship. This resembles the first benefit because if man become pleased with Allah as his Lord, then he submits to his Decision and Decree and relies upon Him.

5. Faith in the Divine Decree truly exposes man to the Wisdom of Allah concerning His Decree of good and evil. Man knows that behind his thinking and imagination, there is the One, Who is Greater and more Knowledgeable. Therefore, many a time we do a thing or something happens and we hate it while it is good for us.

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Sometimes, man perceives that Allah restricted him from doing something he wants, then later when things takes place, he understands that the good was in not doing it.

How many times do we hear that someone reserves a seat in a certain airline for a trip, then when he reaches (the airport), he finds that he has missed the flight and the trip - and then the plane meets an accident.

So, before when he had arrived to board the flight and found that it had taken off, he was saddened but when the accident occurred, he knows that it was good (on his part) and therefore, Allah says, "Struggling is ordained for you (Muslims) though you dislike it. It may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know." [Soorah al-Baqarah (2): 216]

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